

## Let's go solar! - Young people discover the pedelec

### **Introduction**

When young people reach a certain age their mobility behaviour changes rapidly. By the age of 16 they swap from the bike to the moped and by the age of 18 they make the driving licence. With the project „Let's go solar“ the youth centre in Dornbirn, Vorarlberg (AT), wants to highlight alternative modes of transport for young people, especially the pedelec. The goal of the project is to sensitize young people about this problem and to try to change their mobility behavior to a more environmentally friendly way.

### **Facts and Figures**

The project started in spring 2009 and in June 2009 three pedelecs of the „Landrad“ brand were bought („Landrad“ was a research project in Vorarlberg), each with a price of 1500 Euros. These brands were purchased because of the good reputation. Apart from that also two pedelecs of the brand Swift 140 from China were purchased who proved to be of low quality and broke only after short time. At first, the pedelecs were used by the staff of the youth centre when visiting young people around the city. With time the pedelecs were also tried out by the young people attending the youth centre. Now they have the chance to borrow the bikes on a daily basis. In addition to pedelecs they can also borrow scooters and segways in order to keep the interest high. The project is mainly set up within the youth centre Dornbirn, however, it is also presented at public events such as the „Dornbirn fair“ or the „environmental week“. Thus, young people and adults with similar interests get into contact with each other which is an additional benefit.

The costs for the project were about 7000 Euros. From that, 4500 Euros were spent for the three pedelecs, staff hours and public events. The costs were born by the youth centre which is subsidised by the city, the province, the state, the EU (Interreg IV), the employment service (AMS), the Hit Foundation and the Rotary Club. The running costs consisting of staff costs and repair costs are about 800 Euros per month.

The project is considered highly successful because young people visiting the youth centre in Dornbirn were induced to rethink their behavior. They are now more open towards these new modes of transport. Additionally, they are now more courageous what regards their mobility behavior. The future goals are to ensure the change of mind is sustainably established in the young people and to reach even more people.

A lesson learned was that the success of such a project essentially depends on finding the right language to talk to youngsters and to accordingly motivate them. Hence to involve the corresponding qualified staff is a must.

### **Box of advice**

- Do an extensive research on the different products before purchasing because the prices and the quality range from very low to very high.
- Motivate young people to try out the pedelecs by organizing trips.
- Keep the focus on the factor „fun“. Offering different E-vehicles prevents getting bored.
- Organize races and obstacle tracks.

### **Contact details**

Dr. Martin Hagen, Jugendzentrum Dornbirn (OJAD), Vorarlberg, Austria  
phone: +43 (0) 676/8365812  
[martin.hagen@ojad.at](mailto:martin.hagen@ojad.at)